

# **YOUR TOWN HALL**

This meeting was held after the Executive Session that followed the Special Meeting that took place at 6pm. I arrived for this second meeting and it was already in progress.

The Township Planner, Jason Greenspan, was giving a presentation on a program titled Live Where You Work – State Initiative. This was item (f) on the agenda for discussion. From what was ascertained from the presentation, the program involves providing low interest mortgagees through the HMFA (New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Financing Agency) to employees that work in Middletown so that they can purchase homes in Middletown. He said that the Township would have to distribute brochures to the major employers in town so the employees know that the program exists.

Item (g) Township DPW Director, Ted Maloney, said that this was basically a payment to extend the contract until September 15.

Item (h-i) DPW Director, Ted Maloney said that the new bids for the flooding project in Pt. Monmouth will be opened September 8 and, if acceptable, a contract will be awarded at the September 20 Committee meeting.

Item (h-ii) Mr. Maloney said that bids to collect leaves in 12 zones in the Township were advertised. He said that 4 zones were bid on by 1 contractor. Of those 4 bids he said that 2 of them came in at about the same rate that the Township would pay its' own employees. He said that the other bids came in lower than what our employees are paid and that the contracts will be awarded for those 2 zones. Mr. Scharfenberger asked if the contractor had ever collected the leaves in those zones and Mr. Maloney stated that they had not, but they did work in those zones on a daily rate fee. Mrs. Brightbill said that the cost is of concern to her because the cost to do the first two zones is more than double what the bid was for the other

two zones. Mr. Maloney agreed that it is a concern and he called the contractor in to verify that they understood what the contract involves and they feel confident that they can perform the work in the specified time period. Mr. Mercantante said that if the Township thought that the contractor was falling behind then DPW would have to go and help get the schedule back on track. He said that the main thing is to try this process out to see if it is a viable alternative to having Township employees do the work.

Item (h-iii) There was no discussion on this item.

Item (h-iv) There was no discussion on this item.

## **COMMITTEE COMMENTS**

Committeeman Byrnes commented that most of this meetings attendees were at the budget meeting earlier and heard his comments at that time. He said that he met with Assistant Administrator Van Ness and is encouraged to hear that there are savings to be had regarding healthcare expenses, but the employees have to be incentivized to want to save. He said that there are ways to do that but contract negotiations have to be watched closely. Mr. Byrnes said that work on the 2011 budget should begin now to come up with some concrete items like he offered at the earlier meeting. He said that leaf and brush collection has significant savings and was happy that this is being pursued. He also spoke to Mr. Van Ness briefly about garbage collection and the opportunity to get everyone on the same collection service and maybe go to once a week collection schedule. He said that the new recycling system is currently picking up all kinds of paper and cardboard, but needs to be promoted better. He said we're at a critical point in the budget process. There is consensus among the citizens and elected officials that some pretty drastic measures which are a departure

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from past practices will have to be done. He is optimistic that if they are done right it will allow for savings to be extracted.

Committeeman Steve Massell said that he had no comments.

Committeewoman Brightbill commented that the CFO has already started on next years' budget. She said that she could hardly agree that zones J & L would pick up their own leaves. Mrs. Brightbill said that the welcome signs have been refurbished and that it makes a big difference when entering the town. She said that Middletown Day is on and is a perfect example of how Parks and Recreation did a wonderful job. She said that she is committed to being involved and that there are many ways to do things with little cost.

Committeeman Fiore thanked Mrs. Brightbill for taking an interest in Middletown Day. He said that her hard work has paid off in getting local businesses involved. Mr. Fiore said that the budget is a state wide issue because it is everywhere you read. He said that the Governor's tools are extremely necessary or we will face some painful decisions. He did say that they have a plan for the budget and that they have to look at next year's budget.

Committeeman Scharfenberger said that he asked for the creation of a veterans committee. He drew up a mission statement and is looking for an ordinance to be introduced at the September 20 meeting. He said that there are more businesses opening in town, like a dance studio and some restaurants. He said that when the stores are filled it reduces the number of tax appeals in town. Mr. Scharfenberger said that they were prepared for Earl, the recent hurricane. He said that other towns are beginning to discuss introducing resolutions in support of state funding for schools and the need to find other sources than property taxes. He mentioned the passing of former Township Administrator Bradshaw and how he is the one that hired current administrator, Tony Mercantante, as Township Planner. Mr. Scharfenberger said that the 9-11 ceremony will begin at 8:46am and that people should arrive no later than 8:30. He said that the Lt. Governor and

other elected officials will be present. He said that there will be a brief ceremony, they will read the names of those lost and then people can walk through the gardens.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Jim Grenafege commented that in 2007 the recession was made official and then in 2008 there was a global financial crisis. Between 2008 and 2010 there were municipal tax increases that have approached 26%. He said that brokerage firms such as the Wall Street Journal, Moody's, Standard and Poors and Fitch provide opinions of towns financial standings. According to the Township website, the last time these opinions were issued was in 2004. Mr. Grenafege asked if the Township was going to update these opinions. Mr. Trasente stated that every time the Township goes out to bond, a rating is issued and last year the Township received a rating of AA, but he did not know the exact rating number. He also said that the Township only deals with Moody's and Standard and Poor's because they deal with municipal bonds. The rating needs to be done when money is borrowed. Mr. Grenafege asked what the 10-12 points were, mentioned at the close of the last meeting, and which were implemented. Mr. Scharfenberger said that there was a 15% across the board cut in departmental budgets plus wage freezes, but he could not give the exact numbers. Mr. Grenafege asked if the CFO was prepared to provide the numbers since the mayor couldn't remember off the top of his head. Mr. Scharfenberger said that he didn't think that the CFO was prepared either. Mr. Grenafege said that he was disappointed that a statement was made that significant cuts were made and that there are no numbers associated with them after spending 9 months preparing a budget.

Barbara Thorpe said that when health benefits are mentioned, she thinks of how her Medicare payment is 10% of the premium. She doesn't understand why employees only contribute 1.5% towards their health benefits. Mrs. Thorpe said that she is not getting a property

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tax rebate this year and that she will be missing that \$1,500 this year. She said that if the taxes were going up 2.8% and the total tax bill would be going up 4.1% then the 2.8% is 2/3 of the total tax bill, which is a distortion of the facts. She said that the municipal portion of the tax bill was going up 12% which is 2.8% of a \$10K tax bill. She said she felt that the Township could do better and that the plan the mayor said he had all year was to spend and tax with disregard to for the people that pay those taxes. Mrs. Thorpe said that the landscape contractors will not collect the leaves and because of the laws the leaves have to be picked up. She said that whenever the police are monitoring the speed limit on Swimming River Road, they are always at the bottom of the hill by the reservoir. She said that she has asked that they also monitor the northbound side of the road. Mrs. Thorpe concluded by saying that she is a disgruntled resident, but will not move because she won't give her home away because of the depressed housing market. Mr. Scharfenberger said that he got word from the clerk that her 5 minutes were up and that she would have to yield the floor to the next speaker.

Jeff Blumengold commented that he wanted to get back to the budget and issues in town. He said that the Township is paying 100% of the tax appeals and wanted to know the Committees' thoughts to budgeting for next years' appeals. He wanted to know if this can be plotted, what it will be and how to get around it. Brian Nelson responded by saying that there is a lot of legislation circulating in Trenton and the problem is that the appeal process is late in the year and the town can't determine what the potential liability will be until then. He said that the thresholds will be increased in the State courts, which will reduce the number of cases. He also said that it is complex to calculate what will be owed, but they monitor the number of appeals that are in the state courts and that there are currently over 100. He said that instead of paying back the money they try to offer tax credits on future tax bills, but that reduces the amount of revenue that will be generated in that year. Mr. Nelson said that next

year the 2% cap will cause more bonding to pay appeals over a 5 year period. Mr. Nelson also said that property values are struck on October 1 which is late in the year and they are trying to foresee what type of appeals will be brought forward. Mr. Mercantante said that it was not practical to ask the BOE and the County to pay back the tax appeal monies because they were already spent. He said that there needs to be a public awareness that there are certain expenses that the Township incurs for other entities. Mr. Blumengold said that the Township was creating more long term debt and Mr. Mercantante said that this was true only in the years with large tax appeals. Mr. Scharfenberger then informed Mr. Blumengold that the meeting had to continue so the rest of the public had the opportunity to speak.

Allen Vrabel asked why there was so much emphasis placed on the 5 minute rule when there are not that many people present and the speaker has a very interesting point to make. He said that it was 9:05 and nobody else wanted to speak. Mr. Scharfenberger said that he does not know how many more people wanted to speak and it gives order to the meeting. Mr. Vrabel said that a gentleman came up earlier and he was allowed to speak and there is no reason why someone should not be allowed a few extra minutes if the discussion is interesting.

Mary Ellen Hintz said that when the audience is light maybe it could be available for someone to yield their 5 minutes. Mr. Scharfenberger said that Roberts' Rules doesn't allow that. Ms. Hintz then asked what the status of COAH was. Mr. Scharfenberger said that a judge put the Governors' executive order on hold. Mr. Mercantante said that there is legislation moving through Trenton, but there is nothing coming soon that would change the structure of COAH. Brian Nelson said to call Assemblyman Jerry Greens' office to have it moved through the Assembly Housing Committee.

*If you have any questions regarding  
this agenda please contact the  
Township Clerk at 732-615-2014*



**Township of Middletown  
Town Hall- Conference Room  
One Kings Highway  
Middletown, NJ 07748**

## **SEPTEMBER 7, 2010 – WORKSHOP MEETING**

### **1. MEETING OPENS AT 6:00 P.M. - MEETING STATEMENT:**

The notice requirements provided for in the Open Public Meetings Act have been satisfied. Notice of this meeting was properly given by transmission to the Asbury Park Press, The Star Ledger, The Independent, and Two River Times and by posting at the Middletown Township Municipal Building and filing with the Township Clerk all on September 2, 2010.

### **2. ROLL CALL**

Committeewoman Brightbill \_\_\_\_\_ Committeeman Byrnes \_\_\_\_\_

Committeeman Fiore \_\_\_\_\_ Committeeman Massell \_\_\_\_\_

Mayor Scharfenberger \_\_\_\_\_

### **3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

- a. Moment of Silence to Honor the Troops Serving World Wide Defending our Freedoms and Way of Life.

### **4. MUNICIPAL BUDGET**

- a. Public Hearing on 10-233 Resolution Authorizing 2010 Municipal Budget Amendment
- b. VOTE ONLY Resolution 10-189 2010 Municipal & Utility Budget as Amended
- c. VOTE ONLY Resolution 10-190 2010 Solid Waste Budget

### **5. 7:00 P.M. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

### **6. MEETING OPENS AT 8:00 P.M. - MEETING STATEMENT:**

The notice requirements provided for in the Open Public Meetings Act have been satisfied. Notice of this meeting was properly given by transmission to the Asbury Park Press, The Star Ledger, The Independent, and Two River Times and by posting at the Middletown Township Municipal Building and filing with the Township Clerk all on January 8, 2010.

### **7. ROLL CALL**

Committeewoman Brightbill \_\_\_\_\_ Committeeman Byrnes \_\_\_\_\_

Committeeman Fiore \_\_\_\_\_ Committeeman Massell \_\_\_\_\_

Mayor Scharfenberger \_\_\_\_\_

## **SEPTEMBER 7, 2010 – WORKSHOP MEETING**

### **8. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

- a. Moment of Silence to Honor the Troops Serving World Wide Defending our Freedoms and Way of Life.

### **9. KNOWN ACTION ITEMS**

## **REGULAR AGENDA FOR SEPTEMBER 20, 2010**

### **10. CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION/PROCLAMATION**

- a. Employee of the Month August 2010

### **11. MINUTES**

- a. July 19, 2010 Executive Session
- b. July 19, 2010 Workshop Meeting

### **12. PUBLIC HEARING OF PROPOSED ORDINANCES**

### **13. CONSENT AGENDA**

- a. Payment of Bills
- b. Bingo and Raffles
- c. Volunteer Firefighter Applications

### **14. DISCUSSION FOR SEPTEMBER 7, 2010**

- a. Release of Performance Guarantee for Crown Central Petroleum
- b. Release of Performance Guarantee for Chase Bank
- c. Release of Performance Guarantee Wobito's Carpet Center
- d. Community Development Mortgage Release
- e. Monmouth County Open Space Grant
- f. Live Where You Work-State Initiative
- g. Change Order for 2009 Parks Improvements Contract
- h. Purchasing Items:
  - i. Port Monmouth Drainage Improvements (rebid)– T&M
  - ii. Multi-Zoned Leaf Collection - DPW
  - iii. Emergency Snow Plowing (rebid)- DPW
  - iv. Road Reconstruction West 2010 Contract 2 - T&M

### **15. TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE COMMENTS**

### **16. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

### **17. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

### **18. ADJOURNMENT**